

Associated Press

Campaign Pays for Victims' Legal Representation

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BOISE, Idaho (AP) - Victims of domestic violence will have access to quality legal representation through a campaign undertaken by Idaho Supreme Court Chief Justice Linda Copple Trout and corporate leaders.

"Thousands of times a year, Idahoans are victims of domestic violence. The victims are often women and their children and they frequently have few resources with which to pursue their legal rights," Trout said Tuesday.

"This campaign helps fill that gap in legal services for women who need the help at a time when they are in crisis."

The Idaho Partners for Justice Project has already secured pledges of more than \$35,000 from law firms, attorneys, corporations and individuals. The goal is \$100,000. The drive to pay for free legal services will continue for the next two months.

The money goes to Idaho Legal Aid Services and the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Last year, more than 5,000 petitions were filed in Idaho for protection orders in domestic violence cases. More than 12,000 victims contacted shelters or crisis hotlines.

Joining Trout in the announcement was Idaho Bar Association President Fred Hoopes of Idaho Falls and Ida-West Energy Co. Chief Executive Officer Randy Hill, members of the project's executive committee. Also on hand were some women who were victims of such violence, but benefited from free legal services.

Last year's campaign generated enough money and resources to help more than 450 victims. The help ranged from representation in protection order hearings to legal assistance in divorce, visitation and child support cases. The donations are tax deductible.